

COVID-19 Pandemic and Birth Defects

The Impact of COVID-19

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely. It can also increase stress and anxiety. However, social distancing is necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19.



Lower Your Stress Levels

Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. An increase in stress levels while pregnant can have a negative impact on you and your baby. Ways to deal with stress during the COVID-19 pandemic include: taking breaks from watching news stories about the pandemic, monitor social media usage, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and connect with others about how you are feeling.

Emotional Wellbeing

All parents deserve the best - including the very best mental health. Depression during and after pregnancy is common and treatable. If you think you have depression, seek treatment from your health care provider as soon as possible.

Avoid Harmful Substances

Alcohol: Alcohol can have adverse effects on a baby's development at any time during pregnancy, including before you are aware of your pregnancy. That is why it is important to stop drinking alcohol when you start trying to get pregnant.

Tobacco: Smoking during pregnancy can harm the placenta and a developing baby and can cause certain birth defects. Quitting smoking will help you feel better and provide a healthier environment for your baby.

Marijuana: During pregnancy, the chemicals in marijuana (in particular, tetrahydrocannabinol or THC) pass through your placenta to your developing baby and can harm the baby's development.

Prescription Opioids: Any type of opioid exposure during pregnancy can cause neonatal abstinence syndrome, a condition in which the newborn experiences withdrawal from certain drugs after exposure during pregnancy.

Resource:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Coping with stress. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

